

## THE FOREWORD

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## FOREWORD

This edition of THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, the 64th in print, provides comprehensive coverage of political and economic life at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. The volume is divided into three separate, though complementary, sections. In Part One a collection of introductory essays discusses the most pertinent issues affecting the region. Topics covered include the challenges arising from the Syrian refugee crisis, the growth of political Islam and the intellectual origins of that movement, and the issue of Kurdish political autonomy and identity. An essay analysing US policy in the region from the early 20th century until the present day is also featured. In Part Two specialist authors, researchers and commentators examine in detail the main political and economic events in each of the countries and territories in the region. In addition, all statistical and directory material has been thoroughly updated. Extensive coverage of international organizations and research bodies active in the Middle East and North Africa is included in a section of Regional Information, together with a comprehensive archive of documents relating to the history of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and bibliographies of essential publications for further study. A calendar of the key political events of 2016–17 enables rapid reference to the year's main developments.

The year under review was marked by progress in the international military campaign against Islamic State. Efforts by the Iraqi army, supported by the Kurdish *Peshmerga* and Shi'a militia groups, to remove Islamic State militants from Mosul resulted in the liberation of that city in July 2017. Meanwhile, in Syria Kurdish fighters and the US-led coalition began an assault on Islamic State's self-declared 'capital', Raqqa, and the Syrian armed forces regained territory, including the city of Palmyra.

However, other parts of the Middle East remained mired in conflict and instability. Although the Government of President Bashar al-Assad reasserted its control over large parts of Syria from late 2016, the war in that country between opposition forces and those of the Government—supported by the Russian Federation and Iran—continued unabated into late 2017. Yemen remained divided between the Government of President Abd al-Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi, still based in Aden, and the forces of the al-Houthi movement and former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, which were ensconced in the capital, San'a.

Saudi Arabia pursued an increasingly assertive foreign policy, seemingly with the backing of the new US President, Donald Trump. Alongside its ongoing military intervention in Yemen, Saudi Arabia imposed diplomatic sanctions and an economic blockade against Qatar. Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates joined the campaign against Qatar, alleging that the latter had sponsored terrorist groups and interfered in the affairs of neighbouring countries. Saudi attempts to assert influence in the region appeared set to continue, after the leading advocate of that policy, Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Sa'ud, was elevated to the role of Crown Prince. Elsewhere, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey consolidated his authority over that country in April 2017, when constitutional reforms enabling the transition to a presidential system of government were approved at a national referendum.

Other events covered in this edition include the presidential elections in Iran and Lebanon, legislative elections in Algeria and Morocco, government reorganizations in Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey, and the non-binding referendum on Kurdish independence held by the Kurdish regional Government in Iraq in September 2017.

The entire content of the print edition of THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA is available online at [www.europaworld.com](http://www.europaworld.com). This prestigious resource incorporates sophisticated search and browse functions as well as specially commissioned visual and statistical content. An ongoing programme of updates of key areas of information ensures currency of content, and enhances the richness of the coverage.

The Editors would like to express their thanks to all the contributors for their articles and advice, as well as to the numerous governments and organizations that provided statistical and other information.

October 2017



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editors gratefully acknowledge the interest and co-operation of numerous national statistical and information offices, and government departments, as well as embassies in London and throughout the region, whose kind assistance in updating the material contained in THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA is greatly appreciated.

We acknowledge particular indebtedness for permission to reproduce material from the following publications: the United Nations' statistical databases and *Demographic Yearbook*, *Statistical Yearbook* and *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Institute for Statistics database; the *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' statistical database; the statistical databases of the World Health Organization; the statistical databases of the UNCTAD/WTO International Trade Centre; the International Labour Office's statistical database; the World Bank's statistical databases, especially the World Development Indicators database, and the *World Development Report*; the International Monetary Fund's statistical database, *International Financial Statistics* and *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*; the World Tourism Organization's *Compendium* and *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*; the US Geological Survey; the International Telecommunication Union; the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia's *National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region*; Lloyd's List; and *The Military Balance 2017*, a publication of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Arundel House, 6 Temple Pl., London, WC2R 2PG, UK. We are also grateful to the Israeli embassy, London, for the use of two maps illustrating the disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Syria (both 1974).

The following publication has been of special value in providing regular coverage of the affairs of the Middle East and North Africa region: *Middle East Economic Digest*.

## HEALTH AND WELFARE STATISTICS: SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

**Total fertility rate** Source: WHO Global Health Observatory. The number of children that would be born per woman, assuming no female mortality at child-bearing ages and the age-specific fertility rates of a specified country and reference period.

**Under-5 mortality rate** Source: WHO Global Health Observatory. Defined by WHO as the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of five, if subject to the age-specific mortality rates of the year or period.

**HIV/AIDS** Source: UNAIDS. Estimated percentage of adults aged 15 to 49 years living with HIV/AIDS. < indicates 'fewer than'.

**Health expenditure** Source: Global Health Expenditure database. Covering the provision of health services (preventive and curative), family planning activities, nutrition activities, and emergency aid designated for health.

**US \$ per head (PPP)**  
International dollar estimates at 2014. The sum of public and private health expenditures as a ratio of total population. % of GDP

GDP levels for OECD countries follow the most recent UN System of National Accounts. For non-OECD countries a value was estimated by utilizing existing UN, IMF and World Bank data.

**Public expenditure % of total expenditure**  
Government health-related outlays plus expenditure by social schemes compulsorily affiliated with a sizeable share of the population, and extrabudgetary funds allocated to health services. Figures include grants or loans provided by international agencies and other national authorities.

**Access to water and sanitation** Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) (*Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water, 2015 Update and MDG Assessment*). Defined in terms of the percentage of the population using improved facilities in terms of the type of technology and levels of service afforded. For water, this includes house connections, public standpipes, boreholes with handpumps, protected dug wells, protected spring and rainwater collection; allowance is also made for other locally defined technologies. Sanitation is defined to include connection to a sewer or septic tank system, pour-flush latrine, simple pit or ventilated improved pit latrine, again with allowance for acceptable local technologies. Access to water and sanitation does not imply that the level of service or quality of water is 'adequate' or 'safe'.

**Carbon dioxide emissions** Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, citing the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center (sponsored by the US Department of Energy). Emissions comprise those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels (including those produced during consumption of solid, liquid and gas fuels and from gas flaring) and from the manufacture of cement.

**Human Development Index (HDI)** Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report* (2016). A summary of human development measured by three basic dimensions: prospects for a long and healthy life, measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, measured by adult literacy rate (two-thirds' weight) and the combined gross enrolment ratio in primary, secondary and tertiary education (one-third weight); and standard of living, measured by GDP per head (PPP US \$). The index value obtained lies between zero and one. A value above 0.800 indicates very high human development, between 0.700 and 0.799 high human development, between 0.550 and 0.699 medium human development, and below 0.550 low human development. A centralized data source for all three dimensions was not available for all countries. In some cases other data sources were used to calculate a substitute value; however, this was excluded from the ranking. Other countries, including non-UNDP members, were excluded from the HDI altogether. In total, 188 countries were ranked for 2015.

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